

Still their intuitive flights carried them  
at least part of the way  
over the shimmering wall  
that stands between us  
& whatever it hides.

I don't have a picture of Bukowski  
on my wall,  
because I've never found one  
that did justice to his sublime ugliness.

But, Buk, I do have your poems on my desk  
& the music's still there,  
clear & rising,  
just like a symphony by the Bee.

— Richard M. West

Bainbridge Island WA

#### THE HIGHSCHOOL GIRLS (1984)

the girls used to say to me: "you're so  
negative!"  
they said this in a very final way and  
it seemed to satisfy  
them.  
(the boys didn't say anything to me because  
they knew I would take it to  
them.)  
but the girls were very superior  
saying, "you're so  
negative!"  
It made them feel intellectual, or,  
at least, intelligent.  
they had already formed ideas  
of what life was  
and what life should be  
and how one should perform  
under these  
conditions.

it was all right with me, I didn't want to be  
near them, I didn't want to fuck them or  
marry them or  
even date then,  
I found none of them  
beautiful.

now, over 45 years later  
I find that almost everybody is  
negative  
and I'm positive



and I'm still glad I didn't fuck, marry or  
date any of those.  
they, and those their age, have  
largely become so  
sad, embittered and  
psychotic.

I guess that they started being  
positive  
so early  
that they just wore it all  
out.

WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA: 1984-1985, FORTY-THIRD EDITION  
(1985)

"inclusion in which is limited to those individuals who  
have demonstrated outstanding achievement in their own  
fields of endeavor and who have, thereby, contributed  
significantly to the betterment of contemporary society"

and upon the certificate, The Marquis Who's Who Publications  
Board embossed in fancy type  
the name:

CHARLES BUKAWSKI

well, I've had trouble with my name for some time, and  
most of it has come in group situations, a gym class or  
various roll calls of that like, and they usually  
come up with:

"BERKOWITZ!"

"Here!" I'd answer, knowing from the past who they  
meant

but always wondering how they could come up with  
"Berkowitz" from "Bukowski"....

people who had never met, people miles and years  
apart, who when they looked at the name  
"Bukowski" still managed to come up  
with:

"BERKOWITZ!"

"Here!"

but ... "BUKAWSKI"

that's a new one

and I suppose it's what I deserve for  
contributing significantly to the betterment of  
society.